III. Remarks

Claims 1-16 have been cancelled; newly presented claims 17-33 are pending in the application.

Claim Objections

The examiners claim objections have been rendered moot by the cancellation of the original

claims.

Claim Rejections 35 USC §112

The examiners claim objections have been rendered moot by the cancellation of the original

claims.

Claim Rejections -35 USC §102

Claims 1-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Steeghs (US

5,476,532). Although the original claims have been cancelled, they have been cancelled to

overcome formatting problems and not in light of the prior art. Applicants believe the newly

presented claims are of equivalent scope to those cancelled and therefore believe it appropriate to

discuss the Steeghs references.

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The examiner states that the Steeghs anticipates the claimed invention in that, Steeghs teaches a

method for lowering the incidence of clustering of reducible iron-containing material during the

direct reduction of the material comprising contacting the reducible iron-containing material

prior to the direct reduction with a cluster-abating, effective amount of a dispersion.

The examiner goes on to state that Steeghs' dispersion comprises at least one fluxing agent and

at least one particulate material that is substantially non-hardening in the presence of water

(column 2, lines 12-21). The contacting may take place by spraying or dipping (column 5, line 2)

and the reducible iron-containing material is in the form of pellets comprising a binder and other

additives. Binders include a clay, such as bentonite and montmorillionite, a water-soluble natural

polymer, a modified natural polymer, modified starch, starch derivatives, and a synthetic

polymer (column 2, line 65 to column 3, line 6).

What is missing in Steeghs is the inclusion in the coating of a hardening material. Steeghs not

only does not disclose a hardening component in his coating composition, Steeghs expressly

excludes hardening compositions. At column 3, line 67 through column 4 line 5, Steeghs

discusses the components of his coating composition. He explicitly defines particulate materials

which are substantially nonhardening in the presence of water and uses cement as the example of

something that is not a "particulate material being substantially nonhardening in the presence of

water" when he says, at column 4, lines 4-5, "... unlike, for nonlimiting example, Portland

cement." [emphasis supplied]

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Thus, the particulate material of Steeghs is nonhardening. The other materials in Steeghs are the

flux [column 4, lines 41-47] and the clay binder, both of which are inherently nonhardening. It is

therefore apparent that Steeghs does not disclose or suggest applicants use of both nonhardening

and hardening components in the coating.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and discussion, therefore, it is respectively submitted that

the present invention as defined in the pending claims 17 to 333 is in full compliance with all

statutory requirements, and therefore, it is earnestly requested that the Examiner's rejections be

withdrawn and the pending claims be allowed in their present form. However, if for any reason

the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, the Examiner

is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior

to issuing a further Action. Any fee due with this paper, not fully covered by an enclosed check,

may be charged on Deposit Account 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,

Serle Ian Mosoff

Reg. No.25,900

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